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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000595

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN; DRL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KCRIM](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: TWO CASES OF OFFICIAL CORRUPTION
ARE MADE PUBLIC - BUT REASONS ARE UNCLEAR

Classified By: Charge Richard Miles for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: At a May 8 Security Council meeting, the Turkmen President chose to make public two official corruption cases that were related to the compilation of the traditional list of those to be freed from prison on major national holidays. Considering the lack of public information regarding such crimes, the reports provided an amazing amount of detail about the two cases. The reports were most likely a warning to others about interfering in affairs of state regarding who gets on an amnesty list. The President's comments, however, avoided addressing the more serious issue of official corruption. The President has never made any statements regarding the problem of corruption, which has a more negative impact on the function of this government than any other single issue. END SUMMARY.

12. (U) The evening of May 8, President Berdimuhammedov held a National Security Council meeting, during which he asked the head of the Supreme Court to provide surprising details about two recent cases of corruption related to the compilation of holiday amnesty lists, which had been uncovered during an "inspection of law enforcement agencies." Supreme Court Chairman Yazmuradov reported that a conspiracy had been uncovered in which a handful of law enforcement officials had been taking money from people to coordinate the placement of family members' and friends' names on the amnesty list. Yazmuradov identified the following co-conspirators:

--MVD Lieutenant R. Gylychkhanov, an inspector in the office for managing the fulfillment of criminal punishment;
--MVD Senior Lieutenant D. Egenov, a senior inspector of the same office;
--A. Orazmyradov, an officer of the Ashgabat military district;
--O. Gurbanov, an unemployed person;
--A. Khojayevev, a fifth-year student at the police academy.

13. (U) Yazmuradov said they had been found guilty of taking bribes, and of theft of personal property in especially large amounts. They had been sentenced to prison terms of five to fifteen years.

14. (U) A second official bribery case was then also

described. He said that two other fifth-year students from the police academy, G. Gurbansahedov and M. Garayev conspired with the head legal specialist at the Ashgabat tax office, B. Meredov, and others to receive some \$100,000 from the wife of a prisoner named Kh. Amandzhayev. Participants of this conspiracy, Yazmuradov reported, had also been punished. The proceeds from both cases, he said, had been remanded to the state. After hearing the details of these cases, President Berdimuhammedov then said that the special commission was the only body empowered to compile the list of persons to be amnestied. He said that any attempts to undermine this process would be stopped.

15. (U) At the end of the council meeting, President Berdimuhammedov took the opportunity to express his dissatisfaction with certain military and other law enforcement agencies. He formally reprimanded Minister of Internal Affairs (MVD), Orazgeldy Amanmuradov, for failing to ensure public safety, law and order, and for failing to adequately oversee the work of the MVD. He also formally reprimanded the Chairman of the State Border Service, Murad Islamov, for failing to adequately protect the state borders and for failing to correct shortcomings in the Service.

16. (U) Although Amanmuradov was likely being reprimanded in connection with the corruption scandals, there was no clear information published regarding why Islamov was reprimanded. A "Fergana.ru" website article published on May 3, however, reported that on 20 April two Uzbek fishermen who were fishing in a reservoir on the border southeast of Dashoguz

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had been shot by Turkmen border guards when they crossed the border that cuts through the reservoir. One of the Uzbeks died, and the other was seriously wounded. The article suggested that both the Uzbek and Turkmen Governments sought to keep the incident quiet, but an Uzbek human rights group made the details public.

17. (C) COMMENT: This is the first time that Post can recall the Turkmen President addressing a case of corruption, or the details of official corruption cases being made public. The President may have chosen to use the council session to publicize the details of the two cases as a warning to other government officials. In his comments, he specifically criticized the conspirators' interference in a process that was supposed to be strictly controlled by a special amnesty commission, rather than taking the opportunity to address the larger elephant in the room, official corruption. This is just one step. Taking a stand on official corruption would do even more to prevent future conspiracies from forming. END COMMENT.
MILES